

EPA REGION III

◇ Office of Public Affairs

◇◇ P.M. Headlines

Wednesday, December 23, 2009

***** P.M. HOT LIST *****

US court blocks proposed LNG terminal at Sparrows Point

BALTIMORE-SUN A federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., upheld Maryland's denial of a water-quality permit for a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal in eastern Baltimore County, issuing a decision Tuesday that halts the \$400 million project for the time being. The terminal and a related 88-mile pipeline have the approval of federal energy regulators, but Virginia-based gas company AES cannot proceed with construction until it secures the required state permits and meets nearly 170 conditions imposed by government agencies, most of them involving environmental and safety issues. Kent Morton, an AES project director, called the decision disappointing but said the company remains confident that it can still obtain "all of the necessary environmental permits and approvals." The company is considering asking for a rehearing on its permit application, he said.

EPA: Refined permit process coming; Byrd urges clarity

BECKLEY REGISTER-HERALD While no stalled permits came up in their talk, Sen. Robert C. Byrd gained an assurance from the head of the Environmental Protection Agency that a refined structure is coming to deal with surface mine applications. "It seemed to be a very positive discussion," aide Jesse Jacobs said Tuesday, a day after Byrd met with EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson at her invitation. Byrd recently scolded the coal industry over what he termed "scapegoating" in the controversy over 79 pending permits across Appalachia, 23 of them in West Virginia. "We did not talk about individual permits," Jacobs said of the Byrd-Jackson one-on-one.

Clean Drinking Water For Dimock Families

WBNG-TV Dimock, PA (WBNG Binghamton) A Pennsylvania grassroots group is clearing the way to bring neighbors in Susquehanna County clean drinking water. Dimock, PA (WBNG Binghamton) A Pennsylvania grassroots group is clearing the way to bring neighbors in Susquehanna County clean drinking water. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection says Cabot Oil and Gas company is responsible for a series of spills in the past few months, which contaminated 13 water wells in Dimock Township. Damascus Citizens for Sustainability is organizing a water drive to help these households. For every dollar donation, a gallon of bottled water will be provided to the affected families. "We have a lot of abundance in this country. But here it is a situation where these people don't have any clean water to drink. So, we're giving the gift of water," says Barbara ,director of Damascus Citizens. For more information on how to send a donation visit

Stormwater Success Stories Featured on New EPA Website

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS SERVICE WASHINGTON, DC, December 22, 2009 (ENS) - A collection of stormwater success stories on a new U.S. EPA website are intended to inform and educate stakeholders about the benefits of developing pollution reduction budgets, called total maximum daily loads, TMDLs, to protect and restore water quality in their own watersheds. The site provides both sound byte fact sheets that are one to two pages long, as well as technical fact sheets of four to five pages, that are representative of TMDLs prepared by states around the country. For example, oyster lovers and residents near Virginia Beach, Virginia remember a time when oysters from the Lynnhaven Bay watershed were a delicacy served to dignitaries. But high bacteria levels in the Lynnhaven Bay watershed forced the Virginia Health Department to shut down almost all of the shellfish areas for decades, until recently.

***** MORNING HOT LIST *****

Stress on Inland Bays increasing -- Report card gives tidal wetlands a D

CAPE GAZETTE Wetlands in the Cape Region are stressed, a new report confirms. When wetlands are altered or stressed, they are less effective at controlling flooding and filtering water. But, scientists say restoration projects can help return wetlands to health and proper performance, despite a long trend of wetlands loss. The Center for the Inland Bays released the second in its State of the Bays series on the environmental health of the Inland Bays Friday, Dec. 18. Amy Jacobs, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control wetlands scientist, said the department expects a new report showing wetlands lost from 1992 to 2007 to be available early next year. She said she anticipates the report will show significant losses. The wetlands report card shows significant loss of wetland areas from development, at least 60 percent since settlement began in the 17th century. From the 1980s through the 1990s, most wetlands loss came as a result of land being changed to residential and commercial development and farmland.

Editorial: Stop the lawsuit; protect the bays

CAPE GAZETTE A report released last week shows "yet again" that Cape Region wetlands are so stressed, they are losing their effectiveness at what they do best: reduce flooding and filter water as it runs back into the bays. The Cape Region has already lost more than half the wetlands we had in the 1600s, when settlers first came to Lewes. A study expected early next year will show that over the last 20 years, the pace of wetlands destruction has accelerated. New developments built throughout the region and new roads to access them have cut large expanses of wetlands into smaller chunks. Divided into isolated patches, wetlands lose their ability to absorb floodwaters and to serve as nurseries for the rich variety of aquatic life once so abundant in our region. More than 250 species of animals and 300 plants rely on these wetlands to survive. Scientists who study Inland Bays wetlands say by 1992, as much as 35,000 acres had disappeared from the watershed.

W.Va. to get \$50 million in AML funds

CHARLESTON GAZETTE CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., announced Tuesday that the U.S. Office of Surface Mining is sending nearly \$50 million in Abandoned Mine Land funds to West Virginia this fiscal year. The money is used to reclaim lands damaged by mining operations before Congress passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. Jason Bostic, vice president of the West Virginia Coal Association, said, "Anything that supplies money to the fund is good news. It sends coal taxes paid by West Virginia companies back to West Virginians." SMCRA assesses AML taxes of 35 cents on every ton of coal produced from a surface mine, 15 cents for every ton of underground coal and a dime for every ton of lignite -- a

lower quality of coal generally mined in Wyoming and other states west of the Mississippi River. "West Virginia has the largest inventory of historic mining sites in the country," Bostic said.

Feds mull regulating drugs in water

ASSOCIATED PRESS Federal regulators under President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on long-standing policy toward pharmaceutical residues in the nation's drinking water, taking a critical first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they could threaten human health. A burst of significant announcements in recent weeks reflects an expanded government effort to deal with pharmaceuticals as environmental pollutants: - For the first time, the Environmental Protection Agency has listed some pharmaceuticals as candidates for regulation in drinking water. The agency also has launched a survey to check for scores of drugs at water treatment plants across the nation . - The Food and Drug Administration has updated its list of waste drugs that should be flushed down the toilet, but the agency has also declared a goal of working toward the return of all unused medicines. - The National Toxicology Program is conducting research to clarify how human health may be harmed by drugs at low environmental levels.

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

From Early Bird Rendell: Might have to close Pa. museum, parks HARRISBURG - Gov. Rendell yesterday upped the ante in his bid to balance the state budget, saying that without a table-games bill he would have to close the State Museum of Pennsylvania and some state parks in addition to laying off at least 1,000 more government employees.

Program aims to stop blight before it starts Karen Hess grew anxious when the tenants moved out of the rowhouse two doors down from her family's home more than a year ago. The brick and stone house was the only vacant one on the 3300 block of Wellington Street in the Mayfair section of Northeast Philadelphia. Worried that the empty house would turn into an eyesore and bring down everyone's property values, neighbors took responsibility for raking leaves in front of the house or shoveling snow. "It's scary," Hess said, "especially when everyone works very hard to keep up their houses."

Commentary: Why Copenhagen mattered

IN A WORLD THAT DEMANDS simple solutions for complex problems, it is easy to look at the Copenhagen climate talks as a disappointment or even a disaster. There was a hope among many, and even an expectation among some, that 193 nations would sign a treaty reconciling a huge list of divided interests: developed versus developing economies, transparency versus sovereignty, existing technology versus emerging technology, and so on.

Officials: Ruling could kill beach replenishment

HARVEY CEDARS, N.J. - A ruling to compensate the owners of a Long Beach Island property nearly \$500,000 for loss of their ocean view could threaten the future of government-funded beach-replenishment projects, officials say.

PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

From Early Bird Suit dismissed alleging excessive pollutants in river A federal magistrate judge yesterday dismissed a lawsuit accusing the company that runs the Conemaugh Generating Station in Indiana County of polluting the Conemaugh River and exceeding its pollution discharge levels. U.S. Magistrate Judge Amy Reynolds

Hay found that PennEnvironment and the Sierra Club were unable to prove that the plant's excessive discharge levels were actually responsible for the damage to the river. "It requires evidence that the metals being discharged are capable of causing the smells, tastes, discoloration and harm to river otters and fish experienced by the plaintiff members. Indeed, having conceded that other facilities along the river are discharging pollutants, it is entirely possible that it is those emissions which are causing the odors and discoloration and not the metals being discharged by [RRI Energy Northeast Management Company,]" she wrote. The two environmental groups filed a federal lawsuit against the company in 2007 claiming it was in continuous violation of its federal Clean Water Act discharge permit. However, RRI moved to have the case dismissed, arguing that neither plaintiff had standing to bring the claim. Judge Hay, who wrote that RRI admitted to exceeding its discharge levels, agreed.

From Early Bird Business Workshop: Endangerment findings for greenhouse gases On December 7, the U.S. EPA finalized the endangerment finding for greenhouse gases under the Clean Air Act. This states that current and projected concentrations of the mix of six greenhouse gases in the atmosphere threaten the public health and welfare of current and future generations. The finding establishes a basis for the EPA to move forward and propose future standards for regulating greenhouse gas emissions. The six gases are: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. According to the EPA finding, the combined emissions of greenhouse gases from cars and engines contribute to the atmospheric concentrations of the gases and endangers the public health and welfare. The EPA developed the findings in response to the 2007 Supreme Court decision in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, where the court found that greenhouse gases are air pollutants covered by the Clean Air Act. The latest EPA finding differs from the EPA's greenhouse gas reporting rule, which was handed down in October. That rule requires companies and facilities to report on an annual basis their emissions of greenhouse gases. The EPA's finding is different in that it establishes a basis for future control of greenhouse gas emissions. Both the finding and the rule are part of the EPA's inevitable march toward regulation of greenhouse gas emissions.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

From Early Bird Port Authority adds 20 hybrid buses State and federal grants allowed the Port Authority of Allegheny County to quadruple the number of diesel-electric hybrid buses in its fleet with an \$11.2 million purchase of new vehicles in the past year. Twenty new buses were delivered in October and November at a cost of about \$560,000 each -- \$150,000 more per vehicle than diesel-only buses, Port Authority spokeswoman Heather Pharo said. The cash-strapped transit agency has been budgeting money to buy new diesel buses each year, then seeking grants to cover the cost of upgrading some to hybrids. "If it wasn't for grants, we couldn't purchase these hybrids," spokesman Jim Ritchie said. More hybrid buses could be purchased this fiscal year. So far, Port Authority has been awarded \$1 million from the Environmental Protection Agency and county Health Department, and Rep. Mike Doyle, D-Forest Hills, pledged \$700,000 more in the Consolidated Appropriations Act passed by the House this month. Port Authority budgeted \$26.5 million for 55 new diesel vehicles this year.

ALLENTOWN MORNING CALL

From Early Bird When and where can I catch a glimpse of our bald eagles? **Q:** I'd like to get a peek at the bald eagles seen recently in Lehigh Parkway, Cedar Creek Park and Canal Park on the Lehigh River. Any hints how to find them without spending hours and hours outdoors in the cold?

A: It's true that two and maybe three bald eagles have been spotted in recent weeks in the Lehigh Valley. One was spotted Tuesday on the southern edge of the Muhlenberg College campus. Experts suspect the birds are just passing through -- so far no nests have been discovered locally. Bald eagles are most active during mid-day hours, roughly 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., said Laurie Goodrich, senior monitoring biologist at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary near Kempton. Bald eagles mostly eat fish, but are -- in non-scientific terms -- opportunistic feeders. Consequently, they're typically found near large bodies of open water with an abundant food supply. Eagles prefer large trees -- old growth forests are a favorite -- to make nests. Not surprisingly, the local eagles have been seen in parkways with some water source and with large trees. A Morning Call photographer caught one of the birds on the uppermost branches of a tall tree. Like other raptors, bald eagles typically eat by swooping down on prey from treetops or

higher. Bald eagles also fly over water and then dive down, snatching fish in large talons. Bald eagles are more apt to move around on clear days, Goodrich said, because it's easier for them. But they move every day. Bald eagles stand out among raptors. The eagles have up to 96-inch wingspans and weigh 5 to 15 pounds. They stand 28 to 40 inches high. Females tend to be 25 percent larger than males.

CLEARFIELD PROGRESS

From Early Bird Says water contamination confirmed ... Clearfield County Planning and Development Commission Director Jodi Brennan will serve on the PA Wilds planning team's Marcellus shale subcommittee, she announced at last night's meeting. Brennan will study the role the planners might have in relation to the county's Marcellus shale formation, whether it is from an educational or regulatory standpoint. "Right now the main issue is water supply contamination," said Brennan. "It was confirmed springs in the Trout Run and Laurel Run areas were contaminated." Currently, there is legislation proposed to identify what is used during the Marcellus fracturing process. Brennan said she would continue to follow the issue and update the commission. During the director's update, Brennan noted several other items of interest. Brady Township, in conjunction with Bloom, Penn and Union townships, is working to develop a wind energy ordinance. A public hearing was held on the draft ordinance last week. The state Department of Environmental Protection received a response from the Harmony Landfill applicant, Eagle Environmental LLC. DEP requested information about the applicant's leachate enrichment process. Brennan said the applicant has an agreement with the Westover wastewater treatment plant to pipe leachate to its facility. DEP is concerned with how the leachate would be piped, she said, because it is to be piped under Pine Run, an exceptional value watershed. The BioEnergy/Bionol LLC ethanol plant in Clearfield received its first loads of corn last week by truck and by rail. The company expects full-time production to begin in January. The planning commission reviewed water line extension and replacement projects for Irvona Borough and Bradford and Cooper townships and found them to be consistent with the goals and objectives of the county's 2006 comprehensive plan update. It also reviewed Sandy Township's new zoning ordinance and zoning map and had no comment.

WBNG-TV

Clean Drinking Water For Dimock Families

Dimock, PA (WBNG Binghamton) A Pennsylvania grassroots group is clearing the way to bring neighbors in Susquehanna County clean drinking water. Dimock, PA (WBNG Binghamton) A Pennsylvania grassroots group is clearing the way to bring neighbors in Susquehanna County clean drinking water. Pennsylvania's Department of Environmental Protection says Cabot Oil and Gas company is responsible for a series of spills in the past few months, which contaminated 13 water wells in Dimock Township. Damascus Citizens for Sustainability is organizing a water drive to help these households. For every dollar donation, a gallon of bottled water will be provided to the affected families. "We have a lot of abundance in this country. But here it is a situation where these people don't have any clean water to drink. So, we're giving the gift of water," says Barbara ,director of Damascus Citizens. For more information on how to send a donation visit www.Damascuscitizens.org

ABINGTON JOURNAL

Friends of the watershed Notes from the Countryside With Mary Felley There are so many little bands of people doing so many good things for Pennsylvania's waterways, you might expect every mile of stream and river in the state to be in perfect condition. For example, there are dozens of local chapters of Trout Unlimited (TU) around the state, doing projects like restoring trout habitat, teaching wounded veterans to fly-fish and sharing the hidden beauties of Pennsylvania's streams. The TU members I've met are folks who quietly but passionately love to fish—everything about it, from tying flies to stalking a wily trout in a challenging stretch of stream. To find your local chapter, visit www.tu.org. Then there are the watershed associations. There are hundreds of these small groups scattered around Pennsylvania, doing useful projects like water quality monitoring, streamside trees plantings and so on in their local watersheds. Members of a watershed association are brought together by a general concern for the water and things associated with it. They love fishing, canoeing, turning over rocks in the creek with kids or just seeing a healthy stretch of stream in the landscape.

EXAMINER.COM

Gas drilling is coming to Luzerne County: will residents be protected?

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania is about to begin producing unconventional natural gas, but a major precautionary measure has been abandoned by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). All Soil Conservation Districts in Pennsylvania have been stripped of their local authority to review natural gas well permits and monitor the wells for chemical leaks and practices that may endanger residents. Last spring the DEP began allowing gas and oil companies to go through an "expedited permit process" - permits no longer have to wait for approval by the local soil conservation districts. Local Soil Conservation Districts were formed after the Dust Bowl of the 1930's so that local knowledge of the soil and waterways could help prevent market-forces from turning healthy farming areas into a wasteland.

POTTSTOWN MERCURY

Commentary: Greenies gone nuts for the holidays

This is a tough time of year for eco-friendly global planners. In Copenhagen they tried to put together a deal to save the world's forests while we rode around with millions of Christmas trees tied to our car roofs. Among the ruses that came out of Copenhagen, they called on rich countries to pay poor countries to not cut down their trees. In other tree news, Alternative Consumer magazine says we should stop buying Christmas trees and just draw holiday trees on old shopping bags. Here's the green prescription from Alternative Consumer for family fun during the holidays and how the tree should look for the kids on Christmas morning:

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

From Early Bird Commentary: Unified force needed to halt river dredging Now is the time for Delaware environmentalists, fishermen, sportsmen, birders, Ducks Unlimited and tourism businesses to build a broad-based coalition to stop the dredging of the Delaware River. Without doing so the dredging will win by default. Former Gov. Pete du Pont described in his opinion piece in The News Journal on Dec. 2, the huge current contributions of the Port of Wilmington to the economy of Delaware -- 4000 jobs, \$403 million in business revenue, \$28 million in local and regional tax income and \$307 million in annual personal income. This favorable situation would be seriously threatened by dredging the Delaware River channel to a depth of 45 feet. It would permit larger tankers to proceed directly to the huge Philadelphia ports, bypassing Delaware. For many years, it has been the powerful shipping industry in Philadelphia and its political supporters, including Pennsylvania governors like Gov. Ed Rendell, who have been beating the drums for deepening the channel. No wonder the Philadelphia Regional Ports Authority is so willing to help pay for the dredging. They are the ones who sold a reluctant Corps of Engineers on carrying out the project. Disturbingly, they have now gained the support of the Delaware Economic Development Office. Thirty years ago, when I became head of the President's Council on Environmental Quality, my prime job was to help federal agencies abide by the new National Environmental Policy Act that required federal agencies to prepare Environmental Impact Statements before undertaking new projects. It has become a valuable process. The Corps of Engineers' Environmental Impact Statement for dredging the Delaware River is greatly inadequate. They should be required to rewrite it.

CAPE GAZETTE

From Early Bird Stress on Inland Bays increasing -- Report card gives tidal wetlands a D

Wetlands in the Cape Region are stressed, a new report confirms. When wetlands are altered or stressed, they are less effective at controlling flooding and filtering water. But, scientists say restoration projects can help return wetlands to health and proper performance, despite a long trend of wetlands loss. The Center for the Inland Bays

released the second in its State of the Bays series on the environmental health of the Inland Bays Friday, Dec. 18. Amy Jacobs, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control wetlands scientist, said the department expects a new report showing wetlands lost from 1992 to 2007 to be available early next year. She said she anticipates the report will show significant losses. The wetlands report card shows significant loss of wetland areas from development, at least 60 percent since settlement began in the 17th century. From the 1980s through the 1990s, most wetlands loss came as a result of land being changed to residential and commercial development and farmland.

From Early Bird Editorial: Stop the lawsuit; protect the bays A report released last week shows “yet again” that Cape Region wetlands are so stressed, they are losing their effectiveness at what they do best: reduce flooding and filter water as it runs back into the bays. The Cape Region has already lost more than half the wetlands we had in the 1600s, when settlers first came to Lewes. A study expected early next year will show that over the last 20 years, the pace of wetlands destruction has accelerated. New developments built throughout the region and new roads to access them have cut large expanses of wetlands into smaller chunks. Divided into isolated patches, wetlands lose their ability to absorb floodwaters and to serve as nurseries for the rich variety of aquatic life once so abundant in our region. More than 250 species of animals and 300 plants rely on these wetlands to survive. Scientists who study Inland Bays wetlands say by 1992, as much as 35,000 suacres had disappeared from the watershed.

SUSSEX COUNTIAN

LWV forum will explore land use, water quality

The next public forum in the LWV of Sussex County Land Use series will address relationships between land use and water quality. The session is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 13 at the Sussex County Council Chambers, 2 The Circle, Georgetown. This session will provide background on a number of hot issues facing the County, including sources and solutions for pollution in the Inland Bays and Nanticoke River watersheds, how the state pollution control strategy could help clean up those watersheds, pros and cons of ocean outfall vs. spray irrigation, and the role of the Sussex Conservation District in addressing these issues. With recent reports on the seriously deteriorating condition of the Inland Bays and federal focus on cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, affected by the Nanticoke River watershed, development issues affect the entire county. This forum will allow us to better understand how land use decisions affect these watersheds,” said League President Esther Shelton.

DELAWARE COAST PRESS

Rehoboth votes to dump into ocean

REHOBOTH BEACH -- After nearly two years of deliberation, Rehoboth officials announced they will pursue ocean outfall as the means of discharging future wastewater. The decision comes in response to a 2008 state mandate to end effluent dumping into inland bay watersheds -- where Rehoboth is currently disposing of its treated waste -- by 2014. Details of the proposal had prompted more than 500 people to send e-mails to the city in November urging a different solution, but commissioners unanimously chose the ocean plan over one that would have sprayed the treated waste on open land. The average city homeowner now pays \$325 a year in sewage fees. Under any of the proposed alternatives that city officials considered, sewage bills would go up. The range of price for the ocean outfall options is \$550 to \$630 annually per property owner. The land application price range was \$1,010 to \$1,420.

WASHINGTON D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

From Early Bird Letter: Finding flaws in hybrid-car study The Dec. 18 editorial "Cash for clunkers" referred to -- and relied heavily on -- a recent study by the National Research Council. Unfortunately, several of the assumptions that drove that study's conclusions were flawed. The NRC report assumes battery costs that are far higher than current industry estimates. The coming GM Volt, for example, has reported battery costs of \$500 and \$625 per kilowatt-hour, significantly less than the NRC's estimate of \$875 per kilowatt-hour.

WASHINGTON EXAMINER

From Early Bird Gas drilling is coming to Luzerne County: will residents be protected? Luzerne County, Pennsylvania is about to begin producing unconventional natural gas, but a major precautionary measure has been abandoned by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). All Soil Conservation Districts in Pennsylvania have been stripped of their local authority to review natural gas well permits and monitor the wells for chemical leaks and practices that may endanger residents. Last spring the DEP began allowing gas and oil companies to go through an "expedited permit process" - permits no longer have to wait for approval by the local soil conservation districts. Local Soil Conservation Districts were formed after the Dust Bowl of the 1930's so that local knowledge of the soil and waterways could help prevent market-forces from turning healthy farming areas into a wasteland. "Its a little bit of a concern that the conservation districts don't have any input or ability to monitor things for the local community anymore" said Josh Longmore, manager of the Luzerne Conservation District. "We have people right here. Our office is literally within a few miles of the gas wells sites, so if an accident happened we could be there in 10 minutes, while the DEP may take alot longer." Encana, an oil and gas production company, has recently applied to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for permission to drill 3 test wells in Luzerne County. Encana has made no official contact with the Luzerne Conservation District. Encana is a natural gas production company based in the plains of western Canada and has a notorious history in the western US.

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

From Early Bird W.Va. to get \$50 million in AML funds CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- Sen. Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va., announced Tuesday that the U.S. Office of Surface Mining is sending nearly \$50 million in Abandoned Mine Land funds to West Virginia this fiscal year. The money is used to reclaim lands damaged by mining operations before Congress passed the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act in 1977. Jason Bostic, vice president of the West Virginia Coal Association, said, "Anything that supplies money to the fund is good news. It sends coal taxes paid by West Virginia companies back to West Virginians." SMCRA assesses AML taxes of 35 cents on every ton of coal produced from a surface mine, 15 cents for every ton of underground coal and a dime for every ton of lignite -- a lower quality of coal generally mined in Wyoming and other states west of the Mississippi River. "West Virginia has the largest inventory of historic mining sites in the country," Bostic said.

PARKERSBURGH NEWS

From Early Bird Williamstown to turn off water for repairs WILLIAMSTOWN - The water system throughout a sizable portion of the city of Williamstown will be turned off for several hours Monday while a fire hydrant is replaced, an official said. "What areas that will lose water service, we won't know until we start the work and find out which valves need work," said Bob Kimball, city public works director. Kimball said an anticipated 20 to 25 percent of the city will not have water beginning around 8 a.m. Dec. 28. "If other valves have problems, more residents and businesses will have water shut off," he said. Kimball said the way the valves are sectioned off to

different parts of the city, it is difficult for him to predict what areas of town and how many will be without water. "(City workers) have been exercising the valves, but we won't know what valves will need to be shut off for repairs until we begin the work," he said. "Depending on which valves work properly, water may or may not," Kimball

WHEELING INTELLIGENCER

From Early Bird Editioral: Hope Is Not Good Enough "Vote your hopes, not your fears," Sen. Tom Harkin urged his colleagues Sunday night in attempting to ensure that a massive health care bill will be approved by the Senate. That is precisely the problem with the bill, in both its Senate form and the language already passed by the House of Representatives. In an attempt to do something - anything - about health care, too many lawmakers are hoping everything will turn out all right. The legitimate fears about the bills, felt by tens of millions of Americans who will be affected adversely, are being ignored. Harkin, D-Iowa, was successful. The Senate bill was advanced in a vote that occurred shortly after 1 a.m. Monday. The timing was because Senate liberals are pushing to gain final approval by Christmas. Enough is known about the Senate bill to worry many people deeply. Money to pay for it - estimated conservatively at \$1 trillion over 10 years - has to come from somewhere. As usual, that "somewhere" will be the pockets of hard-working American men and women. In effect, the bill would make health care less affordable for many, because of new taxes. Some flaws in the bill are well known. For example, both the Senate and House bills call for nearly \$500 billion in cuts to the Medicare program. But what worries many people is what is not known about the bills. In particular, what power will be granted to federal agencies under provisions buried in the bills? Will the government gain control over health care similar to that granted to the Environmental Protection Agency in regard to industries? At some point in the future, will a government agency declare that it has the power to make sweeping changes in national policy, whether Congress agrees or not? That very thing is happening now in regard to the EPA's announcement that if Congress does not approve some form of "cap and trade" rules, the agency will establish them on its own.

BECKLEY REGISTER-HERALD

EPA: Refined permit process coming; Byrd urges clarity

While no stalled permits came up in their talk, Sen. Robert C. Byrd gained an assurance from the head of the Environmental Protection Agency that a refined structure is coming to deal with surface mine applications. "It seemed to be a very positive discussion," aide Jesse Jacobs said Tuesday, a day after Byrd met with EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson at her invitation. Byrd recently scolded the coal industry over what he termed "scapegoating" in the controversy over 79 pending permits across Appalachia, 23 of them in West Virginia. "We did not talk about individual permits," Jacobs said of the Byrd-Jackson one-on-one.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. Va.)

OSM gets \$50M for abandoned W.Va. mines

(yesterday) CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement is getting nearly \$50 million to clean up abandoned coal mines in West Virginia. Sen. Robert C. Byrd says the funding announced Tuesday is part of \$369 million being made available this year for coal-producing states. OSM says it's going to use the money to fill mine shafts, treat polluted water and fix other environmental problems from mines abandoned before 1977.

HUNTINGTON HERALD-DISPATCH

Rahall's 2010 campaign could be more difficult

HUNTINGTON -- Rep. Nick J. Rahall's support of President Obama and the controversy over surface and mountaintop removal mining in West Virginia could make the congressman more vulnerable in the 2010 election, a political analyst says. It will remain difficult to unseat the 17-term Democrat who was first elected in 1976, says Robert Rupp, a political science professor at West Virginia Wesleyan University. But there are indications that Rahall might have to campaign harder and spend more money than he's accustomed to, Rupp says. Coal-sympathetic residents in southern West Virginia are furious with the Environmental Protection Agency's decision to refer dozens of mining permits, 23 of which are in the Mountain State, to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for

further review. They blame the Obama administration for the coal industry's latest problems and are taking their frustration out on Rahall because he supported Obama for president, Rupp said. West Virginia voters favored Republican nominee Sen. John McCain by a 56-43 percent margin in last year's presidential election.

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

From Early Bird State says mound on Berlin farm is treated sewage sludge Groups had said manure was polluting waterway. A state inspection has determined that the mound on a Berlin chicken farm that environmental groups said was polluting a nearby waterway is treated sewage sludge rather than poultry manure. Maryland Department of the Environment spokesman Jay Apperson e-mailed Tuesday that an inspector found the pile on the Hudson farm was "Class A biosolid," a form of sewage sludge that has been treated to kill harmful bacteria and is only lightly regulated by the state. Jim Parsons, deputy chief of public utilities for Ocean City, said Tuesday that his agency had delivered a load of "biosolids" from Ocean City's wastewater treatment plant to Alan Hudson's farm in August. The sludge was "heat pasteurized" to kill disease-causing bacteria and stabilized with lime to neutralize acidity, he said. The Assateague Coastkeeper and the Waterkeeper Alliance last week formally notified Hudson and Perdue Farms, for whom Hudson raises chickens, that they face a lawsuit for allowing runoff from Hudson's farm to pollute a nearby waterway. The environmental groups released an aerial photograph purporting to be of Hudson's farm, with a large pile of material by a drainage ditch that ultimately feeds into the Pocomoke River. The groups said the pile was poultry litter, a mixture of manure and wood shavings.

From Early Bird More people having a recycled Christmas As the holiday season approached, Kristy Myers sent a message on Twitter to see if anyone minded that she wasn't planning on mailing cards. When no one responded, Myers joined other environmentally conscious people and skipped the paper. It's one of many steps her family took to make this Christmas especially green - a trend that seems to be catching on locally and nationally as people begin applying their year-round ethos to the holidays. The economy surely is contributing to the cause, and may even be driving it, as many Earth-saving measures are also less costly. But Myers says it's all helping reduce waste. "This truly can be about cutting down on spending, simplifying things," she said. "I know other people are cutting back, too, and I'm not sure if they're doing it for environmental or economic reasons, but either way it's a good thing." The Myers family, from Leonardtown, decided to donate the money they would have spent on buying and mailing holiday cards to Heifer International, a nonprofit that works to end hunger and poverty with gifts of livestock and training. The Christmas tree, which they debated even getting, will go in the backyard as a snag tree, which provides habitat for wildlife as it degrades. Other people appear to be changing their spending and sending habits this season. Michael P. Woods, spokesman for the U.S. Postal Service, says first-class mail was down 11 percent in the first two weeks of December, when most cards are mailed. The Postal Service estimates 16.6 billion cards, letters and packages will be mailed over the holidays, down from 19 billion last year. Woods believes that's mainly because of the economy, and the numbers might have been even lower, but, "When it matters, it's mailed, and you can't put an e-card on the refrigerator [or] on top of the mantel."

From Early Bird Editotrial: Copenhagen, a review Heaping praise on the "breakthrough" achieved at climate change talks in Copenhagen, as President Barack Obama did last week, may seem an awkward overstatement at best, but it's just as wrong to mischaracterize the United Nations conference as an outright failure. Rather, it achieved modest progress and represents a hopeful step toward the kind of binding global agreement that is alleged to be the goal of all involved. Is anyone shocked that the meeting did not produce an ironclad deal? There are any number of circumstances that made this virtually impossible (a fact that became apparent weeks ago), not the least of which is the U.S. Senate's failure to support a serious commitment to reducing greenhouse gases produced in this country. At least the interim agreement that came out of Denmark roughly outlines the path that participants will

need to follow in the months ahead if they are to reach a broader agreement. And even that would not have happened had Mr. Obama not personally injected himself into the talks at the 11th hour and held a reluctant China's feet to the fire. That kind of U.S leadership has been so absent from the world stage these last eight years that the president's performance should raise hopes even more than the promised "climate aid" for developing nations - a fund that could rise from \$30 billion to \$100 billion by 2020 - or the commitment by the Chinese to submit to a verification system, although both are vital. Such slow, steady progress neither excites environmentalists nor outrages those who deny climate change science. But it does appear to be typical of the Obama recipe for change: one part hopeful rhetoric, one part incremental movement in the quest for consensus through compromise.

From Early Bird Blog: Cloud grows over chicken farm flap That pile of stuff making a figurative stink on an Eastern Shore chicken farm? The one environmental groups said was polluting a Chesapeake Bay tributary? It's treated sewage sludge from Ocean City, not poultry manure. That's the latest from the Maryland Department of the Environment. Department spokesman Jay Apperson emailed Tuesday that an inspection has confirmed what Perdue Farms and an Ocean City town official both have been saying - that the Assateague Coastkeeper and Waterkeeper Alliance misidentified the light-colored mound they saw from the air on the Hudson farm near Berlin. The two groups threatened last week to sue Alan Hudson and Perdue Farms, accusing them of allowing polluted runoff from the farm to contaminate a drainage ditch that ultimately feeds into the Pocomoke River. The keepers released an aerial photograph (seen above) showing a large pile of something between a storage shed and a drainage ditch, with water draining from the pile to the ditch. Perdue got dragged into it because Hudson raises birds under contract with the Salisbury-based company.

US court blocks proposed LNG terminal at Sparrows Point

A federal appeals court in Richmond, Va., upheld Maryland's denial of a water-quality permit for a proposed liquefied natural gas terminal in eastern Baltimore County, issuing a decision Tuesday that halts the \$400 million project for the time being. The terminal and a related 88-mile pipeline have the approval of federal energy regulators, but Virginia-based gas company AES cannot proceed with construction until it secures the required state permits and meets nearly 170 conditions imposed by government agencies, most of them involving environmental and safety issues. Kent Morton, an AES project director, called the decision disappointing but said the company remains confident that it can still obtain "all of the necessary environmental permits and approvals." The company is considering asking for a rehearing on its permit application, he said.

SALISBURY DAILY TIMES

From Early Bird Tylerton sewer plant fined \$21,450 PRINCESS ANNE -- The Somerset County Sanitary District has been fined \$21,450 by the state for problems with a sewage treatment plant in Tylerton on Smith Island that dates back to when the plant was built about three years ago. The Sanitary District has been struggling with the problem since July 2008 when, as a cost-saving measure, it took over operation of the Tylerton plant from Maryland Environmental Service, a quasi-governmental agency that had been running it and its predecessor since the 1980s. Regular testing has shown high bacteria and low levels of dissolved oxygen that do not meet conditions in the plant's permit issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment, said Robin Street, manager of the Sanitary District. The plant has been under a consent order with MDE for the past two years, and the fine is based on a formula in that agreement, Street said. Sanitary Commission members so far have not figured out how -- or even if -- they will pay the fine, he said.

From Early Bird Letter: Recycle your packing foam, holiday paper, lights From time to time, we hear about how the "new" plastic foam is OK and good for the environment. That statement is only partially true. While there is a vegetable-based packing peanut-type material that biodegrades easily and looks very much like Styrofoam, all of the flat sheets and blocks of Styrofoam are still petroleum-based and take centuries to break down, if they ever do. You can tell if it is the vegetable-based peanuts by wetting one with a little water. The vegetable-based material will become sticky and start to dissolve within a minute or two. Hooray -- these are the good guys and can be composted or flushed down the drain.

OCEAN PINES INDEPENDENT

Coastal Bays: In Santa's wake, head out and count birds in the watershed The Christmas Bird Count is now under way, a yearly tradition in which groups of North American bird-lovers pick a day around the winter solstice and search their designated areas to count every bird they see is more popular than ever. Sponsored by the National Audubon Society, this is held every year between Dec. 14 and Jan. 5. This year the coastal bays watershed count is scheduled for Dec. 28. Volunteers armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists brave the cold weather on a mission to assess the health and record changes in resident populations and ranges, before spring migrants return. The data collected is used to help guide conservation action, and when combined with other surveys, it provides a vital look at how the continent's bird populations have been altered in the past hundred years. This long-term perspective makes it possible to develop strategies to protect birds and their habitat and help identify environmental issues that can affect humans as well. Local trends can reveal habitat fragmentation or provide a warning of an immediate environmental threat, such as groundwater contamination.

EASTERN SHORE NEWS

Drainage woes trouble supervisors

PARKSLEY --Drainage and stormwater matters dominated discussion at the Accomack County Board of Supervisors meeting, a week after heavy rains caused the Highway Department to temporarily close several roads. Supervisors voted to hold a public informational session on a proposed stormwater management ordinance that has been in draft form since March. The Planning Department had asked the board to consider scheduling a public hearing on the ordinance, but supervisors instead opted to hold a work session early next year to further discuss stormwater as well as drainage issues in the county. Bob Gresham of Accomack commented on the draft ordinance during the meeting, saying it focuses too much on development and ignores poor agricultural and forestry practices that cause flooding. He cited a problem with an agricultural crew digging a ditch to drain water from a tomato field on Church Road near Accomack during the recent storm. The water apparently was directed to Virginia Department of Transportation ditches along the road, overwhelming them and leading to flooding and the road's closure the morning of Dec. 9.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND ONLINE

Connector permit decision delayed

The Maryland Department of the Environment has delayed its Dec. 1 decision on the permit application for the cross-county connector project in Charles County until the spring. As explained in a letter to the county dated Nov. 20 and written by Amanda Sigillito, the chief of the nontidal wetlands and waterways division, the delay will allow for a review of the county's argument in support of the permit and provide the Maryland Department of Natural Resources the time needed to study two threatened species of plant that grow in the warmer months.

Maryland Anglers Required to Register with Feds Before Fishing in 2010 ANNAPOLIS (December 23, 2009) – Starting Jan. 1, 2010, Maryland Anglers will need to register with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) before fishing. Anglers can register for free online or by calling a toll-free phone number. This requirement is an essential part of a national commitment to effectively manage saltwater fish populations. The registry will allow fishermen and policy makers to work together to assess the contributions and impacts of saltwater anglers on ocean ecosystems, coastal economies and fish populations. Since the requirement includes anyone who may catch an anadromous species (fish that travel between salt and fresh waters), anyone fishing in the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries and coastal waters, must be registered.

Oyster bed lessees face deadline

PRINCESS ANNE -- Lease holders of more than 5,000 acres of shellfish beds in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are being required to come up with a plan to replant oysters or risk losing their leases under the state's proposed oyster restoration and aquaculture development plan. ... The plan to replant oysters in leased beds is one of a three-prong approach announced Dec. 3 by Gov. Martin O'Malley. According to the state Department of Natural Resources, the goals are: Significantly increase Maryland's network of oyster sanctuaries from 9 percent to

24 percent of remaining quality habitat.

AZOCLEANTECH

Mirant Corporation Completes Installation of Emission Reduction Technologies Mirant Corporation's newly constructed flue gas desulphurization systems have started its operations at the company's three coal-fired electric generating systems in Maryland. This achievement is the result of the company's multi-year effort to bring about reductions in the emissions of sulfur dioxide from the seven coal units with a total capacity of 2,473 megawatts. Selective catalytic reduction systems were recently installed by Mirant as part of its comprehensive air pollution control strategy. These selective catalytic reduction systems were installed to reduce nitrogen oxides in three of the coal-fired units at the company's Morgantown and Chalk Point generating stations. Mercury emissions will also be reduced by the flue gas desulphurization systems and the selective catalytic reduction systems. The usage of these systems will reduce emissions of mercury, nitrogen oxides and sulfur dioxide by 80 percent, 90 percent and 98 percent, respectively.

VIRGINIA

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

From Early Bird Norfolk council angered by new light-rail cost overruns Councilman and HRT board member W. Randy Wright told the council in closed session that he will recommend that HRT chief Michael Townes's employment be terminated, according to other City Council members.

ROANOKE TIMES

From Early Bird Va. wildlife center releases peregrine falcon HAMPTON, Va. (AP) -- A peregrine falcon has been returned to the wild after being nursed back to health by the Wildlife Center of Virginia. The president of the Waynesboro center, Edward Clark, traveled to Virginia's Tidewater on Tuesday to release the falcon at Grandview Nature Preserve in Hampton. Thirty people were on hand for the release. The bird was treated at the Waynesboro center after it was found last month with an eye injury in Accomack County. It was underweight and missing some feathers. There are only about 20 known breeding pairs of peregrines in Virginia.

CHARLOTTESVILLE DAILY PROGRESS

From Early Bird Illegal dump may net \$9,551 fine A state agency is considering fining Crown Orchard Co. \$9,551 over an illegal dump. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's Waste Management Board has written up a consent order calling for the civil penalty, which would be due in 30 days after the board has signed the order. A public comment period on the proposed penalty ends today. The board will review the comments, if any, and decide whether to sign the order or make changes. David Robinett, an enforcement specialist with the state agency, said no members of the public had contacted him as of Tuesday morning. The state agency investigated an illegal dump in April on three-quarters of an acre on Crown Orchard Road. Authorities said the site was filled with about 70 tons of debris, which included propane tanks, trash and old home appliances that may have originated from a cleanup effort in the orchard's migrant worker housing. The site has since been cleaned up. The Albemarle County orchard also was asked to clean up another dump of old equipment. Authorities had been concerned that some of the trash may have been burned and pushed into a stream that may have been part of the orchard's irrigation system. According to the consent order, water samples taken from a stream near the dumpsite didn't exceed any regulatory standards for surface water.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (Va.)

From Early Bird Va. encourages public to recycle Christmas lights RICHMOND, Va. - Virginians for Reliable Energy is encouraging people to recycle their incandescent Christmas lights. Not only will HolidayLEDs.com recycle old lights, but they will provide recyclers with coupons for 15 percent off their more environmentally friendly LED Christmas lights. The Electric Power Research Institute estimates the cost of lighting a holiday tree with LED lights in 13 to 17 cents per season compared to \$6 to \$10 for incandescent lights. Virginians for Reliable Energy is a statewide coalition of individuals and businesses dedicated to ensuring sufficient supplies of reliable and affordable energy to meet the needs of its citizens and businesses.

EASTERN SHORE NEWS

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MISCELLANEOUS

ASSOCIATED PRESS

From Early Bird Feds mull regulating drugs in water Federal regulators under President Barack Obama have sharply shifted course on long-standing policy toward pharmaceutical residues in the nation's drinking water, taking a critical first step toward regulating some of the contaminants while acknowledging they could threaten human health. A burst of significant announcements in recent weeks reflects an expanded government effort to deal with pharmaceuticals as environmental pollutants: - For the first time, the Environmental Protection Agency has listed some pharmaceuticals as candidates for regulation in drinking water. The agency also has launched a survey to check for scores of drugs at water treatment plants across the nation

. - The Food and Drug Administration has updated its list of waste drugs that should be flushed down the toilet, but the agency has also declared a goal of working toward the return of all unused medicines.

- The National Toxicology Program is conducting research to clarify how human health may be harmed by drugs at

low environmental levels.

From Early Bird U.S. wants farmers to use coal waste The federal government is encouraging farmers to spread a chalky waste from coal-fired power plants on their fields to loosen and fertilize soil even as it considers regulating coal wastes for the first time. The material is produced by power plant "scrubbers" that remove acid-rain-causing sulfur dioxide from plant emissions. A synthetic form of the mineral gypsum, it also contains mercury, arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. The Environmental Protection Agency says those toxic metals occur in only tiny amounts that pose no threat to crops, surface water or people. But some environmentalists say too little is known about how the material affects crops, and ultimately human health, for the government to suggest that farmers use it. "This is a leap into the unknown," said Jeff Ruch, executive director of Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility. "This stuff has materials in it that we're trying to prevent entering the environment from coal-fired power plants, and then to turn around and smear it across ag lands raises some real questions." With wastes piling up around the coal-fired plants that produce half the nation's power, the EPA and U.S. Department of Agriculture began promoting what they call the wastes' "beneficial uses" during the Bush administration.

China, India, South Africa vital for climate deal NEW DELHI -- The emergence of China, India, South Africa and Brazil as a grouping was the most significant outcome of the climate talks in Copenhagen, a U.N. official said Wednesday. The Copenhagen Accord - which urges major polluters to make deeper emissions cuts but does not require it - emerged principally from President Barack Obama's meeting with the leaders of the four countries, a group referred to as BASIC.

BUFFALO NEWS

From Early Bird Commentary: The cavalry finally comes to coke plant They hoped. They waited. Weeks turned into months. Months became years. They held their noses against the tarlike smell. They wiped the soot off of the side of their houses. They skimmed black particles out of their pools. They waited. They waited for help from something stronger than all of them put together. They live in boxy houses on a skin-and-bones street off River Road near the Tonawanda Coke plant. Some of them, like Angelo Sciandra, came because they dreamed of owning their own home, tending a garden, growing flowers in the yard. They wrote letters to politicians about the smells and the soot from the plant. They held meetings and complained to the media. Still the dark smoke spewed from the stacks. They hoped and waited and wondered if it ever would change. Last week, finally, their faith was rewarded. Agents from the federal Environmental Protection Agency Thursday raided the Tonawanda Coke plant. State officials, after long-overdue testing, cited it as the prime source of carcinogenic benzene emissions up to 75 times beyond guidelines. Elusive owner J. D. Crane, the philosophical brother of "The Simpsons" —™ odious Mr. Burns, had for months straight-armed watchdog agencies and paid lip service to protesting politicians. Finally, the feds brought down the discipline stick. For all of the justifiable grouching about too much government, it is sometimes the only cop on the beat; the only force mighty enough to protect people from the abuses of Corporate America.

REUTERS

US cracks down on lung-harming ship emissions

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. environmental regulators on Tuesday finalized engine and fuel standards for U.S. flagged ships to cut emissions that cause lung diseases and save more than \$100 billion in health costs. By 2030 the strategy should cut annual emissions of nitrogen oxides (NOX) from large oil tankers, cargo ships and cruise vessels by about 1.2 million tons and particulate matter emissions, or soot, by about 143,000 tons, the Environmental Protection Agency said.

FACTBOX: Shale gas stirs energy hopes (Reuters) - The boom in shale natural gas drilling has raised hopes the United States will be able to rely on the cleaner-burning fuel to meet future energy needs, but concerns about its impact on water quality could slow the industry's ability to tap this bountiful resource. New York City urged a ban on natural gas drilling in its watersheds on Wednesday. Some shale gas facts:

CNNMONEY

Exxon's drilling juggernaut

That business is booming. It's one of the fastest growing energy sectors in the country. But some of the shale is near major population centers, and residents near the drilling are worried about air and, especially, water pollution from the chemicals used to extract shale gas. "A \$41 billion investment is going to make anyone with an environmental eye look sooner and deeper," said Kevin Book, a managing director at ClearView Energy Partners, a Washington, D.C.-based firm that tracks political developments in the energy sector. Exxon's entry into the field, along with interest from other international oil companies, means that shale gas has hit the big time, Book said.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERT

EPA seeks to disclose pesticide inert ingredients

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is requesting public comment on options for disclosing inert ingredients in pesticides. In this anticipated rulemaking, EPA is seeking ideas for greater disclosure of inert ingredient identities. Inert ingredients are part of the end use product formulation and are not active ingredients. . Revealing inert ingredients will help consumers make informed decisions and will better protect public health and the environment. "Consumers deserve to know the identities of ingredients in pesticide formulations, including inert ingredients," said Steve Owens, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances. "Disclosing inert ingredients in pesticide products, especially those considered to be hazardous, will empower consumers and pesticide users to make more informed choices."

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Two Manufacturers, Importer to Phase out DecaBDE in 2012

As a result of negotiations with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, several companies announced last week that they will undertake a three-year phaseout of decabromodiphenyl ether (decaBDE), a persistent and toxic chemical that has been used as a flame retardant in consumer and other products. It has been used in electronics, wire and cable insulation, textiles, automobiles and airplanes, and other applications. The two U.S. producers of decaBDE, Albemarle Corporation and Chemtura Corporation, and the largest U.S. importer, ICL Industrial Products, Inc., announced their commitments. The companies have committed to end production, importation, and sales of decaBDE for most uses in the United States by Dec. 31, 2012, and to end all uses by the end of 2013. EPA intends to encourage the other minor importers of decaBDE to join this initiative.

States Settle With Plant Polluting Region's Air

Air quality in the New York tri-state region stands to benefit from a court settlement requiring Duke Energy, one of the nation's largest electric power companies, to drastically cut sulfur dioxide emissions from a coal-fired plant in Indiana, state and federal officials said Tuesday.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS SERVICE

Stormwater Success Stories Featured on New EPA Website

WASHINGTON, DC, December 22, 2009 (ENS) - A collection of stormwater success stories on a new U.S. EPA website are intended to inform and educate stakeholders about the benefits of developing pollution reduction budgets, called total maximum daily loads, TMDLs, to protect and restore water quality in their own watersheds. The site provides both sound byte fact sheets that are one to two pages long, as well as technical fact sheets of four to five pages, that are representative of TMDLs prepared by states around the country. For example, oyster lovers and residents near Virginia Beach, Virginia remember a time when oysters from the Lynnhaven Bay watershed were a delicacy served to dignitaries. But high bacteria levels in the Lynnhaven Bay watershed forced the Virginia Health Department to shut down almost all of the shellfish areas for decades, until recently.

Reducing Emissions at the Ports The Port of Los Angeles, which in 2004 became the first in the world to provide Alternative Maritime Power for container ships, is expanding that effort. By the end of January, the port's World Cruise Center, which is used by Princess Cruise Lines as well as others, will begin providing alternate power for

cruise ships. The port is also spending \$10.8 million to install 71,500 square feet of solar panels on the center's roof, which will generate one megawatt of electricity. The alternate power technology allows ships to literally plug into on-shore generators while docked, instead of having to rely on onboard engines. "It's a question of clean air," said Christopher Patton, the port's environmental affairs officer, adding that using alternative power is a revenue-neutral move that does not actually save money. "It reduces emissions not just at the port, but improves the quality of the air in the surrounding communities.

Air pollution linked to senior pneumonia

HAMILTON, Ontario, Dec. 23 (UPI) -- Prolonged exposure to higher levels of air pollution can lead to hospitalization for pneumonia in adults age 65 and older, Canadian researchers found. Infectious disease specialist Mark Loeb of McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine in Hamilton led a research team in recruiting 365 older adults from Hamilton who had been hospitalized with radiologically confirmed pneumonia from July 2003 to April 2005.